A Thousand Splendid Suns

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Summary Entry #5

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Laila, Aziza, Zalami, and Tariq have just left Kabul and are now staying in a nice home in a small village near Herat. Laila and Tariq both have found jobs at a hotel with an old friend named Sayeed. They work as attendants and help people with their bags. This new life has been very good to all of them. Even though Tariq has had to spend a lot of his savings, it is worth the while. They are able to afford new clothing for the children and buy new toys with the cash they are earning from the hotel. Laila is much happier here because she can leave the house anytime that she wants to and does not have to wear a burqa. Aziza and Zalami love their new home but Zalami still has not welcomed Tariq in as his father figure. When Tariq tries to be nice to Zalami, Zalami bats it away and is rude to Tariq. Tariq does not take this to heart because he understands how much the boy loved his father. Zalami still wanders what happened to Rasheed but Laila has to keep telling him the lie that he has ran away and she does not know when he will be back. This saddens Laila very much to lie to her son, but she fears that if he knows the real truth it will scar him for the rest of his life. I do think that it is a good idea to keep it from Zalami because he is too young to understand truly what happened back in their home in Kabul. Laila does all she can to comfort the boy. She says prayers with him in the morning and at night just like Rasheed did. I was very happy to see that Laila was trying very hard to keep Zalami happy and I was also very thrilled to see that Tariq was doing his best but not getting upset with Zalami when he didn’t accept his assistance or advice. I can imagine that it is very hard for a young boy to grow up without a father figure. That’s who he learns all of his skills from and learns how to build and hold down a family.

The family would often take day trips to museums and mausoleums. This excited the children because they never were able to do stuff like this at their old home. Tariq would buy them whatever the kids wanted when they were out and often bought them snacks from venders that lined the streets. But after their trips things started looking bad for Tariq. He started to get headaches like his father used to and Tariq would sit up all night moaning because his head hurt so badly. Sometimes it would make him sick. Laila would get him a wash cloth to put on his head and she would give him medicine that a local doctor prescribed. I thought that this would be soon the end of Tariq because once his father had headaches he became very ill and died. But luckily Tariq lived on strong. Laila and Aziza were getting nightmares that would wake them up in a cold sweat and leave both of them frightened. Each had dreams about their lives back in Kabul and feared that that would happen again but when Aziza would awake Laila would comfort her and say that Tariq would never hurt her like Rasheed did.

Tariq and Zalami were starting to get used to each other as the years went on. Zalami started to look up to him and this is exactly what Tariq was looking for. In fact one night Tariq comforted Zalami when he also awake from a night mare and this touched Laila that they were coming together as a family finally. The next day Laila broke some news to Tariq. She wanted to go back to Kabul. Tariq wasn’t opposed to it and said that he would follow her anywhere that she went. Laila was getting tired of her new life. Yes she had nice things but it wasn’t where she belonged. She belonged back in Kabul where she grew up. It took them a month to get packed and ready and they said their farewells to people in the town and headed off. But Laila wanted to stop somewhere first. She wanted to go see Mullah Faizullah. He was a friend of Mariam’s father. When she got to the Mullah’s house, his son answered and told her that Mullah had passed on. When the boy realized who Laila was and her connection with Mariam he immediately let her in and have some tea. Jalil had left a box for Mariam that contained various items that when he died; he gave it to Mullah to look after. Mullah never opened the box and when Mullah passed on he passed it down to his son who didn’t open it. Laila decided that she wanted to open it. What she found amazed her. She found a note from Jalil to Mariam that said he was sorry for never truly accepting her as a daughter and shunning her away. He went in depth about how much he loved and missed her now that she had moved away with Rasheed and hoped to see her once again someday. Also left in the box was some money that he left for Mariam to start her new life if she ever left Rasheed. It wasn’t a lot but it was all he had. Jalil became poor after the Taliban took over and shut down his movie theater and was forced to sell all of his possessions. I personally do not think Jalil was a very good father and all of this still does not make up for the lost time in the past. If Mariam was there and read it, I do not believe she would have accepted the apology.

After discussing more about what happened to Mariam, Laila wanted to see where Mariam lived. So the boy took her up a path that led to the hut where Mariam had lived once before. Laila was astonished to see the conditions she lived in and how rough she had it. This touched Laila and she began to weep for Mariams sake. She explored the area and she could hear Mariam describing it to her as if she was actually there. Once Laial was ready to leave she went back to the taxi and said her goodbyes to the young boy and headed off with Tariq and the kids to their new house back in Kabul. Laila was very happy to be back and she could find a job again and watch her kids grow up where she grew up. Zalami and Tariq then grew very close to each other and formed a very strong bond. Then Laila became pregnant once again and she knew the name of the baby right away. Mariam. I was very happy to see the book end the way that it did. I always like a happy ending. The author developed the characters very well and they all had a very distinct personality to them. I loved the relationship of Tariq and Laila towards the end of this section. It was like they were young again and it was fun to read about. I enjoyed reading this book a lot and I recommend it to most people in need of a good book.